

AGGREGATE COLUMN GROUND IMPROVEMENT

Effective: January 15, 2009

Revised: May 28, 2009

Description. This work shall consist of furnishing design calculations, shop drawings, materials, and labor necessary to construct either stone columns or rammed aggregate piers, generically referred to as aggregate columns, over the horizontal limits, and between the top and bottom elevations specified on the contract plans or as modified on the approved shop drawings.

Submittals. No later than thirty (30) days prior to beginning work, the Contractor shall submit to the Engineer for approval the following information:

- (a) Evidence of the selected subcontractor's successful installation of their aggregate column system on five projects under similar site conditions using the same installation technique. The documentation to be submitted shall include a description of the project, aggregate column installation technique, soil conditions and name and phone number of contracting authority.
- (b) Evidence that the proposed project superintendent for the ground improvement installation has a minimum of three years of method specific experience.
- (c) Shop Drawings sealed by an Illinois Licensed Professional Engineer showing aggregate column horizontal limits, locations, pattern, spacing, diameters, top and bottom elevations, and identification numbers. If an aggregate drainage layer is specified on the plans or a working platform proposed by the Contractor, the thickness, aggregate gradation, and plan dimensions shall be shown in addition to any other details needed to describe the work.
- (d) A description of the equipment, installation technique and construction procedures to be used, including a plan to address any water or spoils.
- (e) The source and gradation of the aggregate proposed for the aggregate columns.
- (f) Design computations, sealed by an Illinois Licensed Professional Engineer, demonstrating the proposed ground improvement plan satisfies the minimum global stability, settlement, and bearing capacity performance requirements stated in the Contract Plans and those contained in this Special Provision.
- (g) The proposed verification program methods to monitor and verify the aggregate column installation is satisfying the design and performance requirements. Also required is a sample of the daily report form to be used by the Contractor to documents the adequacy of that day's work.

Materials. The aggregate used in the columns shall be Class A quality crushed stone or crushed concrete satisfying the requirements of Section 1004 of the standard specifications. The aggregate for any drainage layer specified in the plans shall be a combination of one or more of the following gradations, FA1, FA2, CA5, CA7, CA8, CA11, or CA13 thru 15, according to Sections 1003 and 1004 of the Standard Specifications. Any fine or coarse aggregate requested by the Contractor to be used as either a drainage layer or working platform shall be approved by the Engineer.

Design Criteria. The subcontractor selected shall provide an aggregate column ground improvement plan with shop drawings, and design computations, using an Allowable Stress Design that meets the performance requirements shown on the Contract Plans. These requirements normally include the global stability factor of safety, tolerable settlement amounts at various times and in the case of walls or structure footings, the equivalent uniform service bearing pressure applied at various locations and the factor of safety required. In the absence of performance requirements shown on the plans, the following Allowable Stress minimum performance requirements shall be used:

- (a) A factor of safety of 1.5 against global slope stability failure.
- (b) A factor of safety of 2.5 against equivalent uniform service bearing pressure failure.
- (c) Total settlement not to exceed 4 inches (100 mm) and settlement after completing wall or pavement construction not to exceed 1 inch (25 mm).

The design shall use short term strength parameters for the soil, obtained from the soil boring logs and any geotechnical laboratory testing data provided in the Contract Plans and specifications for stability and bearing capacity analyses. Settlement shall be assessed using appropriate soil parameters. Any additional subsurface information needed to design the aggregate columns shall be the responsibility of the Contractor.

The aggregate column ground improvement design need not consider seismic loadings unless otherwise required as part of the performance requirements shown on the plans.

Construction. The construction procedures shall be determined by the aggregate column installer and submitted for approval with the shop drawings. The following are the minimum requirements that the Contractor will be expected to follow unless otherwise approved in the shop drawings submittal.

- (a) The site shall be graded as needed for proper installation of the aggregate column system. Any grading and excavation below the improvement limits shown on the plans shall be incidental to aggregate column installation.
- (b) Any granular base drainage layer or working platform shall be considered incidental to the improvement. Contractor requested drainage layers or working platforms will only be allowed if approved as part of the shop drawings.
- (c) The aggregate column material shall be placed in a manner that allows measurement of the tonnage or quantity of aggregate placed down the hole.
- (d) Columns shall be installed in a sequence that will minimize ground heave. Any heaving shall be re-compacted or excavated as directed by the Engineer prior to wall or embankment construction and be considered incidental to aggregate column improvement.
- (e) The Contractor shall provide a full-time qualified representative to verify all installation procedures and provide the verification program.
- (f) Disposal of any spoils generated shall be according to Article 202.03.

(g) If an obstruction is encountered that cannot be penetrated with reasonable effort, the Contractor shall construct the element from the depth of obstruction to its design top elevation. Depending on the depth of the completed column, column location, and design requirements, the Engineer may require the construction of a replacement aggregate column at an adjacent location. Construction of additional columns will be considered extra work and paid for according to Article 109.04.

(h) Specific Requirements for Vibrator Compacted Stone Columns:

- i. Stone columns shall be constructed with a down-hole vibrator, probe and follower tubes of sufficient size to install the columns to the diameter and bottom elevation(s) shown on the approved shop drawings. Pre-boring is permitted if approved as part of the shop drawing submittal.
- ii. The probe and follower tubes shall have visible markings at regular increments to enable measurement of penetration and re-penetration depths.
- iii. Provide methods for supplying to the tip of the probe a sufficient quantity of air or water to widen the probe hole to allow adequate space for aggregate placement around the probe.
- iv. The vibrator shall be withdrawn in 12 to 36 inch (300 to 900 mm) increments, to allow placement of the aggregate.
- v. Lift thickness shall not exceed 4 ft (1.2 m). After penetration to the treatment depth, slowly retrieve the vibrator in 12 to 18 inch (300 to 450 mm) increments to allow aggregate placement.
- vi. Compact the aggregate in each lift by re-penetrating it as needed with the vibrating probe to densify and force the aggregate radially into the surrounding soil. Re-penetrate the aggregate in each increment a sufficient number of times to construct the columns as specified in the approved shop drawings and to meet the verification program requirements.

(i) Specific Requirements for Tamper Compacted Rammed Aggregate Piers:

- i. Rammed aggregate piers shall be installed by either drilling or displacement methods, capable of constructing piers to the diameters and bottom elevation(s) shown on the approved shop drawings.
- ii. If temporary casing is needed to limit the sloughing of subsurface soils, the casing should be inserted to at least 2 ft (600 mm) beyond any sloughing strata. Upon extraction, the bottom of the casing shall be maintained at not more than 2 feet above the level of aggregate.
- iii. Aggregate placement shall closely follow the excavation of each pier. The aggregate shall be placed in 1 to 2 ft (300 to 600 mm) thick lifts. Each lift should be rammed with a high-energy impact tamper as specified in the approved shop drawings and to meet the verification program requirements.

Construction Tolerances. The aggregate columns shall be constructed to the following tolerances:

- (a) The horizontal limits and center of each constructed aggregate column shall be within 8 inches (190 mm) of the location specified on the approved the shop drawings.
- (b) The axis of the constructed aggregate columns shall not be inclined more than 2 inches (horizontal) per every 10 ft. (vertical).
- (c) The installed diameter of any aggregate column shall not be more than 10 percent below the effective diameter indicated on the approved shop drawings.
- (d) The average effective diameter of any group of 50 consecutively installed aggregate columns shall not be less than the effective diameter indicated on approved shop drawings.
- (e) The top of the aggregate column ground improvement shall be located within 8 inches (190 mm) of the top elevation shown on the approved shop drawings. When supporting MSE walls, the top elevation may need to be adjusted to the base of the MSE reinforced mass elevation as shown on the approved MSE shop drawings.
- (f) Except where obstructions are encountered, the aggregate column shall be advanced to the treatment depth elevation shown on the contact plans unless otherwise approved in the Shop Drawings.

Any aggregate column installation not meeting the above stated tolerances, or otherwise deemed unsatisfactory by the Engineer, may require installation of a replacement aggregate column(s) at the discretion of the Engineer and at the Contractor's expense. The Contractor shall submit to the Engineer revised plans and procedures to bring installations in those areas into tolerance.

Verification Program. The Contractor shall develop and maintain a monitoring and documentation procedure during the installation of all aggregate columns to verify they satisfy the design and performance requirements. The Contractor shall provide qualified personnel to continuously observe and record the required data. The program shall include, as a minimum, the following:

- (a) Quality control procedures to allow verification that each aggregate column is being installed according to the designer's specifications and the requirements in this Special Provision. This will typically include observations of items such as electrical current or hydraulic pressure, number of high-energy impact tamps, aggregate quantity, etc. that must be obtained to achieve the performance requirements.
- (b) Monitoring methods to evaluate the performance of the global aggregate column improvement system after construction of the overlying embankment or wall. This will typically include installation of settlement plates and may also include monitoring points, inclinometers, piezometers or other instrumentation.

- (c) Proposed means and methods for verification that the installed aggregate columns meet the strength and/or stiffness criteria required by the design. This may include modulus or load tests on individual elements and/or groups, soil borings, and other methods.
- (d) A daily report form shall be completed by the Contactor and provided to the Engineer to document the work performed each day and the adequacy of each aggregate column. The form shall be signed by the Contractor's qualified personnel and include as a minimum the following:
 - i. Aggregate columns installed (identified by location number).
 - ii. Date constructed.
 - iii. Elevation of top and bottom of each aggregate column.
 - iv. Average lift thickness.
 - v. Results of quality control testing such as average power consumption or tamping energy obtained during aggregate column installation.
 - vi. Jetting pressure (air or water) if applicable.
 - vii. Description of soil and groundwater conditions.
 - viii. Details of obstructions, delays and any unusual issues.
 - ix. Amount of water used per aggregate column if applicable.
 - x. Estimated weight or volume of aggregate backfill placed in each column.
 - xi. Average installed diameter of each column.

Method of Measurement. This work will be measured for payment as follows.

- (a) Contract Quantities. The requirement for the use of Contract Quantities shall conform to Article 202.07(a).
- (b) Measured Quantities. This work will be measured for payment in cubic yards (cubic meters) of completed and accepted aggregate column ground improvement calculated by multiplying the plan horizontal limits to be improved times the depth of the columns based on the top and bottom elevations shown on the contract plans.

Basis of Payment. This work will be paid at the contract unit price per cubic yard (cubic meter) for AGGREGATE COLUMN GROUND IMPROVEMENT. Any temporary casing, excavation, disposal of water or spoils, drainage layers or working platforms will not be paid for separately, but shall be considered to be included with this work.